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Dimock supporters to take water plea to EPA chief

By Laura Legere (Staff Writer)

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Supporters of Dimock Twp. families at odds with a Marcellus Shale driller over water contamination plan to take their plea for fresh drinking water to the head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Friday.

EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson is scheduled to participate in a 9:30 a.m. talk about urban sustainability at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia.

Dimock residents as well as environmental and public health advocates plan to rally outside beginning at 8:30 a.m.

The rally follows a letter sent by 26 doctors and health professionals to Ms. Jackson on Tuesday asking her to investigate contamination in Dimock and provide emergency drinking water to the residents. State officials have found that Cabot Oil & Gas Corp. allowed methane to seep from faulty Marcellus Shale natural gas wells into 18 Dimock water supplies - a contention Cabot denies. Recent tests of the residents' water wells have revealed other contaminants, including metals, surfactants, glycols and solvents.

After years of delivering replacement bulk and bottled water to the residents, Cabot received state approval to stop the deliveries on Dec. 1.

"We believe that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should step in to protect local residents if a driller jeopardizes drinking water supplies and the state government does not act," the doctors and health professionals wrote to Ms. Jackson.

The EPA seemed poised to provide such emergency water supplies last Friday when several agency officials called to arrange deliveries of bulk water to several Dimock residents whose methane-tainted well water the state has linked to nearby natural gas drilling.

EPA reversed course on Saturday and has said it has not made a decision to provide water.

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